

# INTRODUCING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY ACT

## HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 24, 2007*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce, along with my colleague Representative VERN EHLERS, the "Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2007." This legislation authorizes funding for sustainability programs in American colleges and universities to develop, implement, and evaluate economic, environmental, and social sustainability programs. The legislation also directs the Secretary of Education to convene a summit of higher education experts to showcase best practices in the field of sustainability.

Hundreds of U.S. cities and companies as well as international agencies, including the United Nations and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, are advancing sustainable practices in all arenas. As population growth, urban development and extreme weather incidents place greater stress on ecosystems around the globe; the need for developing innovative approaches to sustainable development becomes critical to our economic competitiveness, environmental health, and the strength of our communities.

The "Higher Education Sustainability Act" would facilitate the development of programs that keep American students on the cutting edge of technology and global competition while benefiting our communities. The legislation also provides funds to establish rigorous benchmarks for evaluating programs, ensuring that sustainability graduates meet industry standards for best practices. With the threat of global warming looming larger every day, we must invest now in the research and human capital needed to address its impacts and sustain our economy and our communities.

## IN HONOR OF MIKE TORIGIANI

## HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 24, 2007*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Mike Torigiani of Buttonwillow, California for receiving the 2007 Agriculturist of the Year Award from the Kern County Fair. His dedication to young participants of 4-H and Future Farmers of America among other activities make Mike Torigiani most deserving of this honor.

Mike Torigiani was born in Kern County in 1943 during World War II. Son of Gino and Olympia Torigiani, Mike attended Buttonwillow Elementary School and graduated from Shafter High School. Immediately following high school, Mr. Torigiani attended Bakersfield College for two years, after which he began his farming career.

Mr. Torigiani formed a partnership with his uncle Oliver entitled O & M Farms. After 3 years of farming in that partnership, he decided to join his father and brother in business. Mr. Torigiani and his brother, Ron Torigiani, own and operate Torigiani Farms, which is a third generation business established in 1970.

Mr. Torigiani has served as President of the Buttonwillow Chamber of Commerce and is an active member of the Buttonwillow Lions Club. In 1975, Mr. Torigiani was named as Buttonwillow's Honorary Mayor. He has served on the Kern County Fair Beef Board for over twenty years and, serving in this capacity, he has enjoyed every moment he has been affiliated with the Junior Livestock at the Kern County Fair. Mr. Torigiani has shown his interest and dedication through countless hours helping young people raise livestock for the Kern County Fair.

Mr. Torigiani married Sandy Bulluomini in 1965 and together they have two sons, Steve, who is an attorney and partner in Young Wooldridge Law Firm, and Jim, who is an entomologist with Western Farm Service. His grandchildren, Tyler and Mia, are the light of his life and he looks forward to sharing the joy and tradition of the Kern County Fair with them.

The leadership and commitment Mr. Torigiani has shown to the Kern County Fair and the Kern County youth has never wavered. He personifies a man of principle and integrity. Mike Torigiani is a role model for all of us and it is with great pride that I congratulate him for receiving this distinguished award and for all that he does for Kern County residents.

## 2007 SEA OTTER AWARENESS WEEK

## HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 24, 2007*

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the 5th Annual Sea Otter Awareness Week, September 23–29, 2007, sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife. This week-long event provides the opportunity to educate the broader public about sea otters, their natural history, the integral role that sea otters play in the near-shore marine ecosystem, and the conservation issues they are facing.

In the past, the killing of these animals for their fur brought their numbers down to less than 100 by the 1930s. The decline of southern sea otter populations not only has impacts on the species itself, but also affects other marine populations and the surrounding ecosystem. For instance, the demise of sea otters allows their prey sea urchins to proliferate unchecked, which leads to the alarming overgrazing of kelp beds—one of the ocean's nursery grounds for many marine animals. In particular, research shows that the absence of sea otters has a direct link to the sharp decline of kelp along portions of California's coast. Sea otter research also has proven to be an effective method of monitoring toxins and diseases in the marine environment, both of which can affect the health of humans and other wildlife.

The presence of the California sea otter has become an icon of the State's coastal environment and culture, and these charismatic animals bring significant tourism revenue to Californian coastal communities. Protecting them is not only directly advantageous to the otter population, but also fosters indirect benefits on a greater scale.

Groups such as Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Sea Otter, The Otter Project, and The Ocean Conservancy have raised public awareness and helped protect this important species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. Due to these efforts, the southern sea otter population has increased to more than 2,800 animals.

However, these numbers are still significantly less than what is necessary to consider the population stable and their population growth in recent years is slower than expected. Researchers are beginning to identify indirect hazards for sea otters such as non-point source pollution, pathogens, and entrapment in fisheries gear that are causing their population growth to slow. Such realizations support the need for continued research and preventive measures to respond to these issues, while continuing to ward against the direct killings/takings that still occur.

California has taken the first step toward addressing these emerging concerns by signing into law California Assembly Bill 2485, which establishes a State fund for sea otter conservation. This year Californians had the option of donating a portion of their tax returns to sea otter conservation. To date, this has raised \$145,000.

However, this is a federally protected species and the State cannot go it alone. In addition to working with my colleagues to secure Federal funds to support a continued and complete recovery of the population, I am also introducing the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act today. This bill provides for research and recovery programs for the southern sea otter.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the many accomplishments of Defenders of Wildlife and other non-profit environmental organizations, working with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, researchers, fishermen, State and Federal agencies, schools, and many other institutions and individuals, who devote tremendous effort to protect and recover the southern/California sea otter. Sea Otter Awareness Week is just one of their many activities geared towards honoring and saving this species, and I am proud to be associated with this vital work.

## NEVER HURT SOMEONE YOU LOVE

## HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 24, 2007*

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, for too many people in this country, love comes with bruises, broken bones, and black eyes. Twenty years ago, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed. In the past 20 years, there are programs, education, and funding dedicated to preventing domestic violence, but domestic violence is still a dangerous reality for too many Americans. One in every four women will be a victim of domestic violence during her lifetime. But domestic violence doesn't discriminate—it affects everyone—men, women, and children of every race, ethnicity, religion, and economic status. It affects the workplace, increases health care costs, and spurs even more violence among children who witness it at home. The cost of domestic violence is staggering—over \$5.8 billion each year. Domestic violence happens